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PRESS RELEASE

Gender equity essential for sustainable development, Prof Diana Fox tells IIT (ISM) audience

Emphasizing that gender equity is fundamental to sustainable development, economic progress and effective governance, **Prof Diana Fox of Bridgewater State University, USA**, delivered a thought-provoking lecture at IIT (ISM) Dhanbad on Monday. The lecture, titled “*Breaking Barriers, Building Inclusive Spaces: Challenges and Strategies to Address Global Gender Disparities through Decolonial Feminist Partnerships*,” was organized by **Prof Rajni Singh, Dean (Corporate Communications)** and Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT (ISM) Dhanbad, whose academic work focuses on gender studies and women's writings.

Welcoming the distinguished scholar to IIT (ISM), Prof Rajni Singh highlighted the significance of the event and Prof Fox’s visit, stating that “in an era marked by widening inequalities and complex global challenges, conversations on gender justice, inclusion and sustainability are more relevant than ever.” She noted that “interactions with internationally acclaimed scholar-activists such as Prof Fox enrich academic discourse, broaden global perspectives and inspire meaningful engagement with issues of social transformation and inclusive development.”

Addressing an audience comprising faculty members, research scholars and students, Prof Fox emphasized that addressing global gender disparities requires inclusive partnerships, equitable policies and community-driven solutions. She argued that gender equity is not merely a matter of social justice but a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development goals and building resilient societies. Speaking on the theme of decolonial feminist partnerships, Prof Fox highlighted the need to recognize gender diversity and address inequalities affecting women, men, and TG individuals. She noted that gender disparities are often shaped by intersecting factors such as caste, class, race, religion, disability and geography.

Explaining the distinction between equality and equity, Prof Fox said equality seeks to provide the same opportunities to everyone, while equity focuses on ensuring fairness by addressing different needs and circumstances. “Unequal playing fields require equitable solutions,” she observed. Prof Fox stressed that gender equity is central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and must be integrated into climate action, natural resource management, food security and environmental governance. She cited examples of women-led initiatives that have contributed significantly to sustainable development and community resilience across the world. She also underscored the importance of “praxis”—the combination of critical reflection and action—in bringing about meaningful social change. Effective solutions, she said, emerge when academic institutions, policymakers, industry and grassroots organizations work together and co-create strategies with communities rather than for them.

A cultural and applied anthropologist, scholar-activist and documentary film producer, Prof Fox is Chairperson of the Department of Anthropology at Bridgewater State University and Founder-Editor of the Journal of International Women’s Studies. A recipient of four Fulbright awards, her research focuses on gender and sexual diversity, women’s movements, human rights, ecological sustainability and transnational feminisms.

The lecture concluded with an interactive session during which participants engaged with the speaker on issues related to gender equity, sustainability and inclusive development. Dr Sutanuka Banerjee, Assistant Professor, Dept. of HSS, NIT Durgapur, was also present on the occasion.

Rajni Singh
Dean (Corporate Communications)